

**City Club of Portland Presentation
September 26, 2003**

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It is an honor to be asked to speak to the City Club this afternoon. While I haven't attended your lunches before, I have had the opportunity to listen to them very frequently on Southwest Washington's very own public broadcasting radio system.

We call it Oregon Public Broadcasting because we don't want you guys to get jealous over the great asset it has been on our side of the river. If you're listening to this in Southwest Washington right now, how about writing a check to OPB while your hands are free?

Listening to the City Club on OPB has taught me that it's best to keep direct comments relatively brief because during the Q&A, I've learned, City Club members will be happy to tell you what they want you to talk about. Besides, I promised Rex I wouldn't use up all the time.

Bulletin

In preparation for today I was recently given something to read that I was certain was one of the most comprehensive and complete descriptions of the relationship between Clark County and the rest of the metropolitan region ever written.

It was a very well researched and thorough analysis of the region, and it was published by the City Club of Portland.

While reading it, I frequently found myself confirming its publication date because I was pretty certain it had been published just last week. It was published in 1994.

That's not to say that progress hasn't been made in some of the areas the City Club made recommendations on. Clark County and the City of Vancouver are full voting members of both JPACT and MPAC, and Oregonians are voting members of the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council or RTC.

The City Club's recommendation that the region disband the Bi-State Policy Advisory Committee was followed, but we have since reinstated a similar forum through the Bi-State Transportation Committee, soon to be expanded into a proposed Bi-State Coordinating Committee.

The reality is that a separate forum to specifically address issues of Bi-State concern is still needed. While cross-river participation in JPACT, MPAC and RTC are important, the simple fact is that fully 95% of the issues they discuss have very little, if any, bearing for members from the opposite side of the river.

That makes it difficult to keep participation as a priority activity and, to be honest, sometimes makes it difficult for me to always pay as close attention as I probably ought.

We have, I think, resolved the concerns that Clackamas and Washington Counties expressed in 1994, however. When the two of them are in disagreement, my friend Royce Pollard, Mayor of America's Vancouver, and I get together and decide which of us will vote with one and which with the other. Depending on how you look at it, we've made friends or enemies in both communities.

Media

Of all the City Club's recommendations, the area of least progress has been in increasing Clark County's presence in the Portland media market, particularly in broadcast media.

While channels 2 and 6 have made an obvious effort, the fact remains that 99 times out of 100, if I see a Portland television van in Clark County, I can be certain that either 1. a murder has been committed, 2. a child has been abused, or 3. that Tonya Harding had a night out with the boys.

Those aren't the kinds of things any community wants to be known for, but as rarely as such things occur, they are always televised. In the absence of other reports about Clark County, it's little wonder that some Portlanders can get a mistaken impression about us and our community.

Data

There are some things in the report that have changed in nine years.

- The 1994 report said that Clark County had a population of 270,000. Today, only nine years later mind you, that figure is 375,000.
- The report said 40,000 Clark County residents commuted daily to jobs in Oregon. Today, that figure is well over 60,000.
- The report said that Clark County's population was projected to be 400,000 in 2010. At current growth rates, we can expect to reach that number in 2005.

Some 60% of the external growth the county has experienced continues to come from people moving from the Oregon side of the region. Affordable housing, well-funded public school systems, comparatively low taxes, safe neighborhoods, all create considerable induced population demands on our cities.

Since exorbitant housing prices, poor public schools, high taxes and dangerous neighborhoods aren't likely to become public policy goals of ours, much of our growth pressures are likely to continue for the foreseeable future, at least assuming that we can continue to deliver what we want to deliver for our citizens.

I don't want to leave it just at that: it's extremely important to me that everyone in Oregon knows one other thing about Clark County: it rains far, far more on our side of the river than it does on yours, and all of our citizens absolutely hate living there!

Amazingly, however, it never rains when we have visitors, so in honor of former governor Tom McCall, come on up for a visit sometime, come see a concert at the Clark County Amphitheater, enjoy the oldest public square in the Pacific Northwest at Esther Short Park, just don't stay.

Coordinated Land Use

What can we, as a region, do about disproportionate growth patterns? One of the things we can do is move more diligently forward with coordinating our comprehensive land use plans as the City Club recommended in 1994.

While staff-level communication continues, communication at the policy level continues to be challenging. We have done a tremendous job of working together with respect and understanding, even forming genuine personal friendships, but they haven't yet led to the kind of coordinated planning that the 21st century will require of all of us.

Let me give you one example.

For a great many years, Metro has based its land use planning on the assumption that 70% of the region's population growth would locate within Metro's boundaries.

At the same time, they've planned for 80% of the jobs to locate there. Consequently, they've made urban growth boundary and land use zoning decisions to accommodate that intended result.

Now, you don't have to be a statistician or an urban planner to realize that if you're successful in capturing 80% of the jobs in one area, but accommodating only 70% of the population necessary to fill those jobs, there can be only one possible result: commuters.

While Metro was updating its 2040 plan last year, one Metro councilor who had long been publicly critical of (in fact, I would go so far as to describe it as superciliously mocking of) Clark County's growth planning, was asked how the region would accommodate the population growth Metro wasn't going to plan for.

He said, and I quote, "We'll just send them all to Clark County."

Such sentiments may satisfy anti-growth feelings on this side of the river, but they haven't done much to advance the cause of responsible regional planning.

To be clear, I don't mean to put all the blame for the past on Metro or on Oregon. The fact is that Clark County willingly, even eagerly, embraced policies on our side of the river to support that strategy.

When I first took office in 1999, a major community leader in transportation and land use planning in Clark County was educating me about how things are done in the region. He confidently, even smugly, informed me that Clark County's role in the region was to develop our land for residential uses so that our residents could feed into the economic prosperity of jobs offered in Oregon.

That philosophy clearly dominated Clark County's thinking in the 1970's and 1980's, but it began to change with enactment of the county's first comprehensive plan under Washington State's Growth Management Act in 1995. As I'll discuss in a moment, it will change a great deal more when we implement our 2003 update to that plan.

Just so it's clear to all the private sector business folks out there who still question whether or not urban planning really works, go look at the Interstate 5 bridge at 7:45 in the morning if you want verification.

If you think congestion is a result of Metro and Clark County *not* adopting compatible land use plans, respectfully, you'd be wrong. Not only were the two plans compatible, they were symbiotic. At the core of both plans was the silent acknowledgement that Clark County would provide homes and Metro would provide jobs.

Both sides of the river, *both sides*, deserve criticism from current residents for actively planning for the transportation challenges we now must struggle to deal with. If we've failed in the past, it hasn't been because we haven't planned, it's because we've planned poorly on a flawed long-range vision for the region's future.

As the City Club reported in 1994, we need to do better than that as a region, but we aren't yet. Metro's current plan continues to assume a larger capture rate for jobs than for housing and plans for a disproportionate share of regional population growth to go to Clark County.

If their plan is successful, we can only assume that the problems the City Club identified in 1994, and that the I-5 Trade Partnership Study reaffirmed just last year, will continue to get worse.

Clark County Initiatives

Somewhat unilaterally, Clark County has decided that we will try to do something to prevent that on our own.

First, while population in Clark County has been growing an average of 3.7% since the 1990's, we're basing our updated plan on a 1.8% growth rate. That's still more than the 1.6% growth predicted for the entire region by Metro, but not much. Don't misinterpret our immediate intentions: at some point, our rate should be and will be no greater than the regional average.

I know there are some on this side of the river who are thinking, "Well, it's about time Clark County got on the bandwagon" and certainly a lot of Clark County residents are pleased to see us begin to reign in sprawl. But our unilateral decision will likely come at a consequence, not just for us, but for the region as a whole.

Unlike many parts of the country, the Metro region has done extremely well at preserving affordable housing options. Yes, housing costs have certainly gone up a great deal, but nowhere near as much as they have in most vibrant, metropolitan regions in the country.

Some people in the Metro region credit this to growth management planning and, indeed, I strongly believe that's helped, but you also had one other advantage over most of them.

You used to have a safety valve for excess demand. You used to have Clark County.

As we begin to reduce access to that safety valve (and we are) the upward pressure on housing prices throughout the region will increase. Again, some say that's a good thing because it will discourage people from moving here, but the people it will hurt most won't be people from California or Texas, most of whom sell over-priced homes there and can afford more than many natives can.

The real victims will be the children who are growing up here and who would like to raise their children here.

Ten years from now, the greatest challenge facing our region may well be affordable housing, just as it has become in all the metropolitan regions that never tried to plan for growth in the first place. It must begin with regional, multi-jurisdictional cooperation.

I promise you, Clark County is willing to do our fair share, but we're not going to be the safety valve for the region any longer. If we're going to continue to avoid the problems of housing costs that other regions already face, we need to start collaboratively talking about this issue right now, before it becomes a major crisis.

In short, we're throwing down the gauntlet and we're challenging the Metro region to rise to its own high ideals. It's time for you to honestly plan for growth just as Clark County has begun to honestly plan for it. Best of all: let's plan for it together.

Economic Development

The second thing we're doing in Clark County is engaging in the most comprehensive and determined economic development initiative in our history. We've got a lot of catching up to do and we intend to do it.

Consistent with the City Club's 1994 recommendations, this will not involve competing against any other community in the Metro region. More importantly, it *must* not.

We know that one of the best things that happened to enhance the economic development potential of Clark County in recent years was when Intel chose to locate and expand in Washington County. Because of that, we were able to attract companies like WaferTech, SEH America, Sharp, Underwriter's Laboratory and Panasonic.

Economic development in the greater metropolitan region must not be a zero sum game but a fully cooperative and mutually supportive regional effort from which *all* our citizens and communities can benefit.

That effort must involve aggressive recruitment of new businesses and industrial clusters to our region, but also must include the willful creation of a business environment throughout the region that encourages existing companies to grow and thrive.

It was my pleasure to participate in PSU's Metropolitan Studies Program when it called together regional leaders to cooperatively address this issue.

I believe the initiatives put forward by that group, by the Portland Development Commission under Don Mazzioti, by the Columbia River Economic Development Commission under Bart Philips, and by the Regional Partners representing communities throughout the greater metropolitan region, is the right direction for this region to go in with regards to economic development.

It was my pleasure and the pleasure of Vancouver Mayor Royce Pollard to join with Mayor Vera Katz earlier this summer at the Portland Chinese Garden to help encourage Louisiana Pacific to *stay* in Portland.

It will also be my pleasure, and sincere honor, to rush to our shared, regional airport immediately after this City Club discussion to join Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski and Portland Mayor Vera Katz on a regional trade mission to Germany.

Someone yesterday asked me why I'm going with them rather than with Washington's Governor, and with Seattle's Mayor. The answer is simple: they don't invite me or anyone else from Southwest Washington on their trade missions. Your governor and your mayor did and I thank them for that.

Without that kind of regional focus on both sides of the river, and in every community that makes up this single economic market, jurisdictions may succeed in moving jobs *around* the region, but not succeed in creating jobs *for* the region.

That is the zero sum game in which no one wins for long and in which no one should naively engage in.

Progress

I don't want to leave with the impression that we've made no progress on greater regional cooperation or on a broader regional vision, because we have.

People like Rod Monroe, Rex Burkholder, David Bragdon, Serena Cruz, Vera Katz, Jim Francisconi, Beaverton Mayor Rob Drake, all have picked up the regional mantle from some of the great regional leaders of the past like Mike Burton, Charley Hales and Niel Goldschmidt.

In all honesty, it's still hard for me to call Mike and Charley leaders of the past because they have so recently been such good friends of mine and of the citizens of Clark County.

These are leaders who don't just sit around waiting for Clark County to call with our concerns, but who actively reach out to understand our interests before decisions are made.

We need more leaders like them on *both* sides of the river.

Conclusion

I'll close my comments with something the City of Portland and its citizens don't often hear from your surrounding communities but that you should! **Thank You.**

Thank you for being the core from which all of our regional successes have flowed and continue to flow.

As a lifelong native of Clark County, thank you for school field trips to the Portland Zoo, for my seventh birthday on the Ramblin' Rod show, for childhood summer classes at OMSI, and for my Senior Prom at the Top of the Cosmo.

Thank you for the Schnitz, for the Civic Auditorium, for the Willamette Rep and for the Rose Quarter. Thank you for PSU, for OHSU, and God bless you for Doernbechers.

I even thank you for the Portland Trailblazers, mostly for that phenomenal night in 1976, but for a lot of other great games too. I look forward to again seeing more Trailblazers on the court of basketball rather than the court of justice.

If you all decide to build a baseball stadium, I'll be proud to draft a few Portland players for my fantasy baseball team. Just so the bug is in your ear early on: what better place for a Triple A farm team than in Clark County or in the City of Vancouver?

Some of us out on the frontier can get a little uppity sometimes and it may sound like we've forgotten what a great asset the City of Portland has been to our past, to our present, and to our opportunities for the future.

Never misunderstand us: you are a great, proud and very beautiful city. As you flourish, so flourishes the region. You have enriched my life and the lives and opportunities of every Clark County citizen.

While Clark County will always be a lot different from you, we are proud to be your neighbors, your friends, and your partners in creating a future we all will share together.

Thank you and God bless you all.